Daily Eagle

THE BIG MATCH.

America Has Not Had a Billiard Tourney Since 1885.

VIGNAUX TOOK PART THEN.

The Next Tournament Will Be Held in Chickering Hall, New York, and it Will Be Participated in by Slosson, Daly, Sexton, Ives and Heiser.

America has not had a professional billiard tournament since 1885, when Maurice Vignaux, the celebrated French player, visited these shores and did battle with the experts. The result of that tournament showed that this country could more than hold her own with the most expert of the foreigners, and although Vignaux made an excellent showing he could not vanquish the Americans. Commencing with Feb. 20 and continuing for a week, Chickering hall, in New York, will be the scene of action for a well arranged professional billiard tournament between five of the most expert wielders of the cue of this country. The players are George F. Slosson, Maurice Daly, William Sexton, Frank Ives and J. Randolph Heiser. These men vary very much in experience, age and style of game, and indications are that the tournament, partly for those reasons, will be unusually interesting.

The style of game played will be what is called the "balk line," and with the exception of Slosson, eight inch balk lines will be used. Slosson will play fourteen inch balk line. These balk lines are instituted to prevent rail nursing, and they answer the purpose admirably. If straight billiards were played the experts would get the balls on the rail and run many points, keeping the balls within two or three inches of each other all the time. To do this requires great skill, but it is not very interesting for the spectators to watch, as they can see nothing except the very slight maneuvering of the balls. The balk line style requires open table shots to be played, and as those are always interesting to the onlookers, any style of game which will produce them is popular for tournaments.

DALY.

The reason that the balk line style is much harder to play and produces more open table shots is as follows: The balk lines are drawn parallel with the cushions eight inches from the latter, or in Slosson's case they will be fourteen inches. The rules of the game are that in making every alternate shot a ball must be driven outside of the line. It can be seen at a glance that this effectually stops rail nursing, for even though the result of a shot brought the balls together on the rail, the player can make but one shot with the balls so gathered and in trying the next one he must drive either the cue ball or one of the object balls outside the balk line. This last shot may bring the balls on the rail again, when he is allowed to make one with them there, but the next shot after that must send one of the balls outside again. It is difficult to make long runs in a balk line game, and the wider the space is between the cushions and the line, just so much harder the game is.

Slosson, being the best player among the intending competitors for the coming tournament, is handicapped on inches in the balk line. The difference between the eight and fourteen inches is much greater than the majority of billiard players, not having noticed much the balk line style of game, would suppose; but the experts having decided upon this difference, it must be taken for granted that all will have an equal chance. Thirty days after the New York tournament the same players will take part in one in Chicago. The handicapping for this one will be by points in place of lines.

The players have agreed on a fourteen inch balk line, and different number of points will be apportioned each one to make. It cannot be decided how the handicapping of the Chicago tournament will be done until the results are seen of the New York series. The number of points for the New York games will be 500. Slosson will be the scratch man in the Chicago one, just as he is in New York. The prizes will be worth competing for, for there is a subscription of $5,000, to which will be added the entrance fee of each contestant, which is $500, making in all the snug sum of $7,500 to be distributed on the basis of 40, 30, 20 and 10 per cent. to the four leaders. All the players are practicing steadily, and a fine display of the gentleman's game will surely be given.

SLOSSON.

The star of the players is George F. Slosson on account of his being a scratch man. He has been playing billiards for about eighteen years. He shoots a medium stroke and is very careful and methodical. The worst that can be said about his game is that he is easily affected while playing and his nervousness has very often been most aggravating to his admirers. Jacob Schaefer is the only man in this country who can hold his own with Slosson, and in close play it is a toss up between them. Schaefer did not enter the tournament on account of not liking the style of handicapping. Slosson uses an eighteen ounce cue.

Maurice Daly is the next famous player to Slosson. His time for some years has been so occupied in taking charge of his several rooms that he has not figured prominently in practical playing as much as might be supposed he would wish to. He has been playing good billiards for about twenty years and is now 40 years old. He shoots a stroke a little more rapid than Slosson, but it would not be called a fast one. He is known as a splendid all round player, and at cushion carroms is unusually strong. He uses an eighteen ounce cue. His practice playing for the tournament has been very strong, and he says even though during the past few years he has not wielded the cue very much, he feels as though he could play as good as ever, for his knowledge of the game keeps increasing. What inspires confidence in his playing is that he is an excellent match player, and has been known to rise to the occasion numerous times when he appeared a little out of form. It is thought he will make a great bid for first place in the coming tournament.

William Sexton is 33 years old, and has been playing billiards as an expert for about fifteen years. He is a very brilliant player, has cool judgment, and is not easily put out. Around the table play is his specialty, and his knowledge of angles is considered as good as any. He has a quick stroke, and uses a nineteen ounce cue. He excels in fancy shots, and some which he makes cannot be performed by any one else. His sharp, snappy stroke enables him to put a great deal of twist on the cue ball, and the evolutions he can make it go through are wonderful. He, like Daly, is a good match player, and when hard pressed plays a close game which is very hard to beat. Some say he plays better when behind than when leading.

SEXTON.

J. Randolph Heiser has been considered an expert for about ten years, and is now in the neighborhood of 32 years of age. He is liable to play a very strong game, and equally liable to go all apart. He is very much like Slosson in temperament without possessing Slosson's experience. Heiser has a very peculiar stroke, and it has been jokingly called a grape vine twist. A front view of his stroke would lead one to think that he could not hit anything, but such is not so, for his record shows that he has played some wonderful billiards in his time. He is playing better now than ever, and since this tournament was first proposed he has kept rather quiet and practiced steadily. It would be foolish to predict where he will finish.

Frank Ives is the youngest of all the American experts. He has been out only about four years and is now 25 years old. He is quite different in build from the other experts, being a large, heavy man, who, when he plays Slosson, will make the latter appear like a pigmy. Ives gives great promise of eventually being a remarkable billiardist, and the fact of his being considered almost as good as the other American experts now speaks for itself. He created some enthusiasm during the last year by the wonderful form he showed at the game, and predictions are numerous that he is the coming billiard player of this country.

MALCOM W. FORD.

Millie Hylton.

The new pantomime favorite, Millie Hylton, hails from Birmingham, England, by way of London, where she made her debut in 1886 in "Monte Cristo, Jr." This was at the Gaiety theatre, and after appearing in "Aladdin" as the Genii of the Ring, at her birthplace, she came out as a male impersonator in London music halls and rose at once into favor. Her first appearance in the United States was at Long Branch in 1888, at Tony Pastor's theatre. At the close of the summer season Miss Hylton appeared at Mr. Pastor's New York theatre, and later made a tour with his troupe. This American tour she repeated in 1889, and returned to Birmingham to play in a Christmas pantomime.

MILLIE HYLTON.

Millie Hylton is sister to Betty Lind, and she hopes to bring her talents and fine voice into legitimate stage work.

Fact and Fancy.

Sir Algernon Fitzbattleaxe (a gallant Crusader)—Here, good Cedric, take my helmet while I rest. My armor bears me down like molten lead beneath the burning rays of this fierce tropic sun.

Sir Algernon (ten minutes later)—It's lucky for us, Bill, that we've got our ulsters and foot warmers, for we'd freeze to death in this pasteboard armor. It's the coldest theatre I ever played in.

Small Potatoes.

Among the Cree Indians of Canada the husband lives in the wife's house, but never speaks to his parents-in-law till his first child is born. This alters the whole situation, for, though the father is not a member of the family, his child is, and so confers on him the status of "father of So-and-so," which becomes his name, the whole affair being then brought to a logical conclusion by the family ceasing to cut him.—Once a Week.

TROUBLE BEGUN.

The Brotherhood of Players Is in Disturbed Waters.

HOW W. I. HARRIS SEES IT.

He Says Jealousy, with Its Green Eyes, Is Already Undoing Much That Has Been Done—The Situation at the Present Time Summed Up.

The Players' league is beginning to realize that it has some rough roads to travel before it reaches anything like success. It is already having some hard lines and will have a good many more before a ball is thrown in its opening season. Jealousy has already begun to get in its work, and the discussions it is causing threaten to make serious gaps in the line of battle.

The leaders in the new movement are finding that their anticipation of easy running was a trifle previous. The principal trouble is, of course, the lawsuits, but these they are confident they will win, or at least they appear to be sure of victory. Just the same, the suit against John Ward, which will come up during the term of court which opens Jan. 6, is giving them some uneasiness, owing to the supplemental contract which Ward has with the New York club and which he drew up himself.

In this document he practically acknowledged that the club had a right to his services in 1890, because he inserted in it a clause that he was not *to be held* for 1890 at a less salary than $3,000. The natural inference is that unless he believed the club had a right to so hold him he would not have used the words I have put in italics. This supplemental contract will have an important bearing on the case, although the Brotherhood leaders affect to think otherwise.

Another difficulty, and one which the Brotherhood men are willing to admit is injuring them and their cause, is the rapacity of some of the players, which is to a large extent superinduced by jealousy. It is this rapacity which is causing many of the desertions that are occurring from time to time. Those men who have held off from signing regular Brotherhood contracts are striving to work the new league for large increases of salary.

Mr. Ward claims, and he is no doubt correct, that there was a thorough understanding in regard to the salaries to be paid when the original agreements to secede were signed. It was definitely stated that all players were to receive from the Players' league the same salaries they had in 1889, except in the cases of men who had been classified, and these men were to get the salaries they received in 1888. This was the agreement, made as plain as possible, and Ward and the other leaders say that the players must stick to it. They argue, and with justice too, that it would be unfair to those who have signed in good faith to allow those who have not signed to boom their salaries at the expense of the faithful and of the Players' league. It was in pursuance of this policy that Tiernan, Welch, Myers and Thompson were refused their demands, and the result was that three of them deserted to the League, and Welch will surely follow.

Welch, it appears, they were willing to give a little more money, but his other terms were deemed to be preposterous. Welch wanted $4,000 a year, with a strong personal guarantee for three years and a proviso inserted in the contract that in case of his death the salary for his unexpired time should be paid to his family. Tim Keefe, in speaking of it, said: "We want to do the square thing by Welch, but we couldn't agree to such demands. It was not a question of salary. We were willing to give within a few hundreds of what he wanted, but we could not guarantee him any more than the others, which is a year sure and his salary for such other time as he might be in our employ; but as for insuring his life for his benefit, that is simply absurd." It will be seen that Welch must moderate his terms if he expects to be with the Brotherhood.

Other men are insisting on large increases in violation of their agreements, and are being "called down" by the Brotherhood leaders.

Those who are charged with taking advantage of the situation brought about by the Brotherhood movement to squeeze their friends are not silent under these attacks. Their argument is unique, to say the least, and will set a good many of the players to thinking. They argue that the leaders, knowing that rebellion was certain and having determined on it long before they signed in 1889, held out for increase of salary and played the limit on the League in that respect, and of course men like Ward, Keefe, Ewing, Hanlon, Pfeffer and O'Rourke, who got all the way from $3,000 in 1889 to $4,500, are quite content not to ask for increase of salary. They knew what was coming and got in on the ground floor. The rank and file did not, and they claim that where they have been getting less salaries than men who are no better players, they are entitled to have their compensation equalized.

These arguments are scoffed at by the Brotherhood leaders, who do not hesitate to charge that they emanate from the League. Whether this be true or not is immaterial. The arguments work, and with others, similar, are fostering that jealous spirit which is fatal to success. Some men who have already signed are beginning to discover that other men, no more entitled to it than they are, have been granted an increase, and they are sore in consequence. The men who have not signed have one unanswerable argument. It is this: If any unclassified player is entitled to an increase over his 1889 salary all are entitled to all the increase they can get.

The multiplicity of managers is proving a bad thing in Philadelphia. Already two prominent backers, Messrs. Whittal and Taggart, the latter a newspaper proprietor, have become disgusted with so much bickering and have sold their stock and withdrawn from the movement. Mr. Taggart says that "too many cooks spoil the broth and he has had enough." His stock has been promptly taken up, but his defection has caused a feeling of insecurity among the Brotherhood men in Philadelphia.

In Chicago the Players' League club has lost its grounds, owing to the opposition of the citizens who live in the vicinity, who objected to the closing of the street that runs through the grounds and have persuaded the mayor to veto the order of the aldermen permitting the use of the grounds. I am told that the same difficulty threatens the Brooklyn Players' club grounds and the Pittsburg Players' club is having a great deal of trouble in finding any grounds at all.

These are minor troubles compared with those which are to come. When the various clubs begin to equip their grounds and put up advance money in earnest next March they will find that their ideas have not been in accord with the magnitude of the necessities of the business.

Will the players, or rather the stockholders, for on them will come the burden, have the nerve and backbone required to overcome the increasing difficulties which confront them?

W. I. HARRIS.

DAVID BIDWELL.

Death of a Southern Theatrical Manager.

David Bidwell, whose death in New Orleans was recently recorded, was a remarkable character in the American amusement world. Shrewd and enterprising, a hard worker himself, exacting equal earnestness from others, he was at the same time companionable in his social moods and a liberal man with his means. Mr. Bidwell began active life on the Hudson river. He was born at Stuyvesant, on the Hudson, in 1821, and followed his father's business of steamboating during the summer, and during the winter season sold tickets at the theatres in New York city. After becoming a man he was for a time a landlord, or, as called nowadays, a saloon keeper, in New York, and also a ship merchant in New Orleans, where he went in 1846. He soon left mercantile life, ran the Phœnix house for a time with pecuniary success, and then built the house of amusement called the Amphitheatre. This was soon enlarged and christened the Pelican theatre, with Dion Boucicault as the opening attraction. This was in 1854, and two years later Mr. Bidwell entered into partnership with Dr. G. R. Spalding and Charles J. Rogers.

DAVID BIDWELL.

The firm managed several circus expeditions, and started the circuit theatrical system with traveling combinations. In 1867 the firm, now changed to Spalding & Bidwell, and Avery Smith projected the Great American Champion Circus and sent it to the Paris exposition. Mr. Bidwell was made commissioner from Louisiana for the exposition, and he acted as director of the circus enterprise. The capital invested was $150,000, an immense sum for that time. The pick of all the circus troupes in the country accompanied the expedition. The Theatre du Prince Imperial was leased and remodeled until it seated about 5,000, and was the largest in the world. The house was packed daily for three months, and the enterprise in Paris was a great success.

After the exhibition Mr. Bidwell opened in the Holborn Hill amphitheatre, London, and played to full houses. From 1868 to 1874 Messrs. Spalding & Bidwell managed theatres in New Orleans, St. Louis, London, Paris, Havana, Memphis and Mobile, and maintained one traveling circuit. Since 1874 Mr. Bidwell has owned and managed the Academy of Music, St. Charles theatre and the Grand Opera house, at New Orleans, and managed the Academy of Music at the time of his death.

In business affairs Mr. Bidwell was a Napoleon. He brought to his far away New Orleans patrons the favorites of the north, and had in his stock companies at times Marie Wainwright, Joseph Wheelock, Barton Hill, Charles Wheatleigh, Minnie Monk, Charles Welles, Osmond Tearle, May Conway and others.

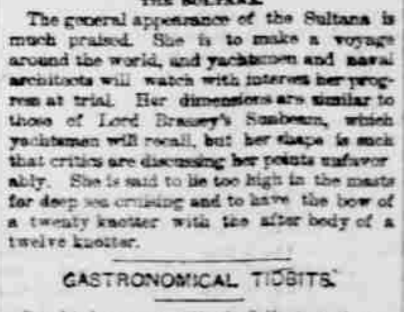
Ten Pin Balls.

As all the world is now either rolling or talking about ten pins, an inquirer from The Rochester Post-Express sought for some information about the most essential appurtenances of the game, and applied to Frank Schwikert, the billiard table manufacturer, for information about the balls and pins which he makes. He said: "The balls are made of lignum vitæ, which grows in South America and is imported by dealers in New York. The trees grow to be fifteen inches in diameter, but the outside of the wood is not hard enough to make a good ball, and we use only the heart of the tree. The largest balls usually made are eight inches in diameter, while the smallest ones are four inches.

"Twelve balls constitute a set for one alley, and they are worth from $1.50 to $3.50 each. They are turned in a lathe by a tool which moves in a true circle, and will make a ball from an inch to a foot in size. The block of wood is set in a chuck and one end is turned into a hemisphere. It is then changed around and the other end presented to the tool and the ball is nearly finished, needing only to be finished with sandpaper and polished, all of the work being done in the lathe. The balls get 'out of true' from use and they have to be turned occasionally." The pins are usually made of maple and are turned in a lathe.—Rochester Post-Express.

The Yacht Sultana.

The new auxiliary steam yacht Sultana is the first of the kind constructed in America, and her unique points attract wide attention. Her designer, Mr. Beavor-Webb, designed also the Carmen, an ocean steam yacht which made many deep water voyages.



THE SULTANA.

The general appearance of the Sultana is much praised. She is to make a voyage around the world, and yachtsmen and naval architects will watch with interest her progress at trial. Her dimensions are similar to those of Lord Brassey's Sunbeam, which yachtsmen will recall, but her shape is such that critics are discussing her points unfavorably. She is said to lie too high in the masts for deep sea cruising and to have the bow of a twenty knotter with the after body of a twelve knotter.

GASTRONOMICAL TIDBITS.

Doe birds are exceedingly delicate eating.

Raw oysters are no longer served with ice.

Chitlings may be cooked in many different ways.

Philadelphia roasting chickens rule the roast.

Smoked goose liver sausage is a German edible.—Hotel Mail.

Insult to Injury.

A wise professor loved a pretty maid,
Calling the cause of science to his aid,
'Twas thus he wooed her:
"My little work on the prehistoric human
Has need of your bright wits, as I'm a true man,
Oh, share my toil and fame, most lovely woman!"
'Twas thus he wooed her.

The mercenary girl made answer trite:
"I really fear I must, sir, in that light
Decline to view you;
Although you cause me pride and great elation,
I cannot wed above my mental station,
But I'll become, for a consideration,
Assistant to you."
—Philadelphia Saturday Review.

A Costly Word.

Dobson—These telegraph companies are rank monopolies. Only the other day a friend of mine paid $10 for ten words.

Swan—That's nothing; it cost me $100 for a single word one day last week.

Dobson—For heaven's sake, man, you don't say so!

Swan—Fact; my wife asked for a sealskin and I said "yes."—Kearney Enterprise.

A Logarithm.

A man who was steering a yacht,
His course through the water forgacht,
And he stuck in the mud
With a dull, sickening thud,
And the captain then swore a whole lacht.

But at length when the tide struck the barque,
It floated away like a sharque,
And hereafter he'll steer
Of that spot very clear
And look out for a low water marque.

A Natural Indignation.

Biddy—Shure, mum, an' if yez don't be afther takin' the clock out av the kitchen Oi'll lave yez. It be afther insultin' me beau.

Lady—Why, how can the clock insult anybody?

Biddy—Shure and before Patrick had been in the house foive minutes it said, "Cook coo!"—Jewelers' Weekly.